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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000412

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: NO SURPRISES HERE - DEFMIN SARGSIAN NAMED PRIME
MINISTER

REF: A) 07 YEREVAN 356 B) 06 YEREVAN 985

Classified By: CDA A. F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (U) In a widely anticipated move, President Kocharian announced April 5 that Defense Minister Serzh Sargsian would replace Prime Minister Andranik Margarian, who died suddenly on March 25 (ref A). Sargsian stepped down from his position as defense minister, where he has served for approximately seven years, to become eligible for the prime minister slot.

12. (C) On March 28, Sargsian previewed for visiting DAS Matt Bryza--in full detail--how Kocharian would proceed. According to the constitution, Sargsian has 20 days to appoint a new cabinet, which will have 20 days to enact a program for the new government. The National Assembly will then have five days to approve the new program. Sargsian said that the plan was to wait the full allotted period before taking each step. Since this would last until after the May 12 elections, no real work would be done on the new cabinet's "program" for submission to the parliament. Sargsian said that the only change between the current cabinet and the one which he would appoint would be the nomination of Seyran Ohanian--currently the "Defense Minister" of the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" as Armenia's Defense Minister.
GODFREY